

The Coverup of the Coverups: The Protectors of the Assassins

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"Any investigating committee going into this battle with its eyes closed . . . and with an attitude that says, "We don't know whether the clandestine parts of the CIA or FBI or other agencies were involved in the assassinations; so let's find out," is probably doomed to failure from the start. Therein lies the intelligence community's and the coverup group's greatest strength. They are relying on obfuscating and frustrating by any clandestine means, with great financial and organizational resources available, the efforts to reopen the four cases."

1975 Developments

The year 1975 is an important period for both assassination researchers and Congressional committees investigating domestic assassination conspiracies and coverups. By paying particular attention to those individuals and organizations who continue to defend the Warren Commission and to ridicule the researchers, the power structure responsible for covering up the assassination conspiracies can be detected. The odds are becoming very large that any such defender at this stage knows perfectly well what happened to the two Kennedys, Dr. King, and George Wallace. He (or they) is very probably being paid, coerced, or encouraged to continue the coverup of the coverups, in the same way that the second echelon (St. Clair, Haig, and Co.) continued the coverup on behalf of Richard Nixon in the Watergate affair.

As public pressure to reopen the four cases mounts, as the various non-committed media organizations publish more and more, and as Congressional support for the various resolutions to reopen increases, those who have covered up the truth can be expected to step up their all-out counterattack. Since these people include the power centers in control of the clandestine parts of American intelligence organizations, the fight will be fierce indeed. The senators, representatives, Congressional staffs, researchers, and media people can expect harassment, executive blockage, noise in the information loop, discrediting, and yes — more murders. It is very important for those responsible people and organizations now entering the fray for the first time to understand and to appreciate what they will be up against.

Counter Actions

One way to know who the "enemies" are is to keep a close watch on these counter actions and to determine who and what are behind them. Of extreme importance is the recognition, right away, that intelligence resources are devious enough to plant false evidence, fake witnesses, and misleading data; and even to place their own people on the staffs of the Congressional or media investigating teams. They have been doing this in a very successful manner ever since November 22, 1963.

Any investigating committee going into this battle with its eyes closed to this problem, and with an attitude that says, "We don't know whether the clandestine parts of the CIA or FBI or other agencies were involved in the assassinations, so let's find

out," is probably doomed to failure from the start. Therein lies the intelligence community's and the coverup group's greatest strength. They are relying on obfuscating and frustrating by any clandestine means, with great financial and organizational resources available, the efforts to reopen the four cases. If they are reopened, the clandestine methods (including murder) will still be used, to make sure the investigations lead nowhere or at worst, lead to a conclusion they can buy. One of these possibilities now seems to be surfacing. It is the "Castro did it in revenge" concept.

The Stakes

The new investigators must come to appreciate what is at stake in this forthcoming battle. It is, in effect, a fight for control of power in the United States. The victory, if won by "our" side, will have a tremendous impact on everyone and everything in our country. Power structures that have existed and controlled us all since World War II will crumble. The people will finally assume a decent measure of control through those among their representatives who survive the battle. This is not a mere fight to determine who the gunmen were in Dallas, Memphis, Los Angeles, and Laurel Park, or who backed and sponsored them. As the old schoolboy expression goes, now we are playing for all of the marbles. The main struggle, as in Watergate and the impeachment, is over the coverups, and the coverups of the coverups.

Presumed Guilty

The only safe approach for investigators is to reverse the standard American legal procedure, and assume that everyone is guilty of covering up until proven innocent. Jim Garrison said, after the trial of Clay Shaw ended, "You can't try an intelligence case in a normal American court." The opposition, with their clandestine resources, backed by presidential power and authority, has the capability of influencing judge, jury, witnesses, and evidence. This will certainly be true in any Congressional investigation or hearings.

An article titled "Nixon, Ford, and Political Assassinations in the United States" was published in the January 1975 issue of "Computers and People".¹ In the article, what was called a "reasonable hypothesis" was used to explain Ford's pardon of Nixon, gaps and alterations in the Nixon tapes, and Jaworski's resignation. The hypothesis stated that Ford, Nixon, and an "inner circle" of high-level people in both administrations and in the intelligence community, have been going to extreme lengths to cover up

the truth about all of our domestic assassinations and especially the JFK assassination. The hypothesis stated that the Nixon tapes will forever be withheld from us because they contain discussions by Nixon, Haldeman, Mitchell, Kissinger, and possibly Ford about the conspiracies in the four assassination cases, and particularly discussions about the cover-ups. Since January, no evidence has turned up to disprove the hypothesis. In fact, a number of events have taken place which would tend to reinforce it. If a Congressional committee accepts the hypothesis as a possibility at the beginning of their deliberations and investigations, the entire set of ground rules under which they would operate would be changed. For example, Mr. Ford, Mr. Rockefeller, Mr. Kissinger, most of the present administration, the CIA, the FBI, the Justice Dept., certain Senate and House committees, the military, and many others would be placed on the "Presumed guilty of coverup until proven innocent" list. The range of investigative resources in this situation is obviously quite curtailed. The committee could not rely on any information developed for it by the FBI, the CIA, the Justice Dept., the Rockefeller Commission or any other Executive Branch agency.

A screening process would have to be created to detect planted agents, planted witnesses, and planted evidence. This would be difficult. How does one check whether a proposed staff member is a CIA or FBI agent without the investigative resources of either agency? An external, trustworthy, investigative body would have to be created by such a committee, each member of it being carefully screened.

How to Detect the "Bad Guys"

There are three ground rule questions that would help separate the coverup side from the truthseeking side in this battle.

First, is the person or group willing to support the reopening by Congress, of at least the JFK assassination, if not all four major cases, and their links to Watergate?

Second, is the person or group willing to state publicly that there was possible involvement in at least the JFK assassination conspiracy and coverup of the intelligence community, including the CIA and the FBI, but not excluding others?

Third, if the person or organization has access to potential evidence or information, either in files, or in witness form, will they make the information openly and publicly available, whether it be classified or not?

The third ground rule should really separate the innocent from the guilty. It does so because it strikes at the real root of America's problems. There should be no information, short of actual wartime military secrets that has any bearing on domestic assassinations or clandestine domestic intelligence operations, that cannot be made public.

Let's take a close look at some of the recent counter actions by some of the coverup strategists to see what can be learned about who is on what side.

The Rockefeller Commission

When President Ford announced that a special commission would be formed to investigate the intelligence agencies, a number of researchers predicted who would be appointed as chief of staff. It follows

from "a reasonable hypothesis", that Ford's main Achilles heel which could be exposed by such an investigation, is his own involvement and that of Richard Nixon in the JFK assassination coverup. The prime prerequisite for a chief of staff of the Rockefeller Commission (the staff generally controls what the commission sees) was therefore a willingness to continue the JFK conspiracy coverup. What man could be better qualified for the position than David Belin? Belin was not only willing, he was a nut about continuing the coverup. He had published a new book in 1973, "Nov. 22, 1963, You Are the Jury",^{2/} as part of his coverup crusade. He was one of the few Warren Commission lawyers who would still appear on TV or radio to debate researchers and to defend the Commission.

Of course, during the Commission's existence, he was one of only two lawyers assigned the task of determining that Lee Harvey Oswald was the assassin of both John Kennedy and Dallas policeman J. D. Tippit. He went out of his way to overlook testimony, witnesses, and evidence, and even to suborn perjury in the case of witness Charles Givens, according to Sylvia Meagher in her excellent analysis of Belin's interrogation of Givens, published in "The Texas Observer".^{3/} Belin is still overlooking evidence. In December of 1973, this author debated Belin on a TV show called "AM-New York" with Robert Vaughn as host. Following the broadcast I showed Vaughn and Belin the beginning of my JFK assassination slide presentation of the photographic evidence. I did not get past the frames from the Zapruder film, 313 to 321, that show the back-and-to-the-left motion of the President's head following the fatal shot.

Belin's Contribution to the Coverup

Belin grew very nervous and upset when he saw those slides and marched out of the room, announcing that he had to go somewhere. I pressed him as to whether he had seen the Zapruder film in motion or looked at the slide series before, and if so, how he explains the back-to-the-left motion. He refused to answer or to discuss the subject. The JFK assassination section of the Rockefeller Commission Report demonstrates Belin's mental state on the subject.^{4/} It was obviously written by Belin with little or no contribution by anyone else. The report on this subject is a blatant, almost laughable attempt to cover up the truth once again. It might have been titled, "That old gang of mine is here again." In addition to Belin, who did all of the interviewing of researchers, the "old gang" included:

- Lyndal Shaneyfelt, the FBI agent who testified as ballistics and photographic expert before the Warren Commission
- The testimony of the autopsy doctors, Finck, Boswell, and Humes, was again cited as Rockefeller Commission evidence.
- The Ramsey Clark panel of doctors which looked at the autopsy photographs and X-rays in 1968. Their report was cited as evidence.
- The Warren Report's summary of evidence against Oswald was included in the report.

Belin actually talked only to four or five researchers in conducting his so-called re-investigation of conspiracy and allegations that the CIA was involved in the assassination. These witnesses included Robert Groden who showed him the Zapruder, Nix, and Muchmore films in motion and stop-action, Dick Gregory and Ralph Schoenman, who made certain

suggestions about the CIA and some tramps or winos arrested after the assassination, Dr. Forrest Chapman from Michigan, a known supporter of the Warren Commission's findings that no shots came from the grassy knoll, and also a close friend of Bud Fensterwald, and Cyril Wecht, Allegheny County, Pa., Coroner and long-time critic of the Warren Commission. Belin did not interview any of the researchers who have been collecting the evidence of CIA involvement for more than seven years.

Ignoring of Dr. Wecht's Testimony

Dr. Wecht had been conducting honest medical research for more than eight years. The version of the Rockefeller Report appearing in the "New York Post" not only ignored Wecht's testimony completely, but even included the following statement, "The Commission staff also interviewed by telephone Dr. E. Forrest Chapman of Michigan, the only other physician who is known to have studied the autopsy photographs and X-rays." The phrase "only other" in this paragraph refers to the autopsy doctors, and the Ramsey Clark panel of doctors. The Commission, in other words, did not re-examine the autopsy photographs and X-rays, but relied on the Clark panel and Dr. Chapman for their contentions about the direction of the fatal shot.

In stating that Chapman was the only other doctor who studied the autopsy materials, Belin totally ignored both Dr. Cyril Wecht and, surprisingly, Dr. John Lattimer, who supported the Warren Commission. Belin discredited Schoenman and Gregory's testimony by focusing attention on the three winos arrested that day. He ignored the other testimony given by the two witnesses and also misquoted their statements about the winos. Gregory did not state they were Hunt and Sturgis. He said they bear some resemblance and we should find out who they really were. Belin did not want to find out who they were. He only wanted to prove they were not Hunt and Sturgis. As for Groden and the films, Belin's comments are replete with provable and even laughable errors too numerous to go into in this article. No explanation is given in the "N.Y. Post" version of the Rockefeller Report for the violent back-to-the-left motion of President Kennedy's head. Rumors were rampant before the report came out that Belin was planning to have a new panel of doctors explain away the motion by contending it was caused by a neuromuscular reaction following the fatal shot. He was shown the Zapruder film in Washington, D.C. by Robert Groden. At the fatal shot point, he became very nervous and with eye twitching, he began to shout, "Neurospasm, neurospasm!"/4/

Suppression of Annoying Facts

The truth of the matter is that Belin and the rest of the Warren Commission staff along with the Commissioners never did look at the Zapruder film in 1964 in slow motion to analyze that back-to-the-left acceleration of John Kennedy's head. They may have noticed it in passing, but it was like Givens' original testimony about where Oswald was and where Givens was during the period just before the shots were fired./3/ It didn't fit the lone assassin solution. It was annoying and it got in the way. So they ignored it and suppressed it. The Warren Report and the 26 volumes of hearings and exhibits contain not one word about the back-to-the-left motion. Belin in later years when confronted with the film, has been extremely agitated and totally defensive about it.

So, when the researchers' forecast that Belin would be named head of staff for the Rockefeller

Commission came true, they were not at all surprised. And Belin lived nicely up to his reputation, fulfilling his primary duty for Ford and Rockefeller. In April 1975, Mr. Ford was asked by a reporter during a press conference held in San Diego, whether the Rockefeller Commission would be looking into new evidence of conspiracy in the JFK assassination and accusations that the CIA was involved./5/ Ford, perhaps without thinking, said the Commission would be investigating possible CIA involvement. At that time, Belin and Rockefeller had maintained a total silence on areas being investigated and any conclusions reached. The next day, David Belin broke that silence, stating he was making an important exception to their rules in discussing Mr. Ford's remarks. He said the Commission had already conducted an investigation of the new charges of CIA involvement and conspiracy in the JFK assassination, and had concluded the Warren Commission was right and that Oswald acted alone. That would end the matter there and then./5/ The report confirmed Belin's statement. A possible disclaimer on Rockefeller's part is a statement that the "staff" was responsible for these conclusions. Things that can be learned from this development, along the lines postulated at the beginning of this article, are that Gerald Ford, Nelson Rockefeller, the other members of the Rockefeller Commission, and David Belin have decided to cover up the coverup. Therefore they must be presumed guilty by any Congressional committee investigating assassinations and not trusted at all. Unless the Rockefeller Commission Report reverses the Belin statement, its contents can be presumed to be fraudulent. Congress can expect that any evidence the Commission may have turned up pointing toward CIA involvement in the JFK conspiracy or in the coverup conspiracy will be suppressed and not made available. It is already known that the report as released to the public did not include information about CIA involvement in assassinations of foreign heads of state.

Frank Church, on the day following the issuance of the report, came very close to calling it a coverup. He said it exposed only the tip of the iceberg.

Gerald Ford's Book

President Ford, in a continuing effort to cover up the truth about the JFK assassination, published his own book "Lee Harvey Oswald - Portrait of the Assassin" in 1965./6/ "A Reasonable Hypothesis" contends that Richard Nixon talked Ford into publishing that book to quiet the doubts in America about the Warren Commission's findings. Several new books by researchers had already appeared by then, demonstrating how wrong the Warren Report was. Public polls then showed an increasing percentage of the population believing there was a conspiracy. The title of the book was a giveaway. The words "the assassin", as opposed to "an assassin", were in themselves significant. Ford used classified information in the book that had been completely unknown to researchers and the public. Recent declassification through Harold Weisberg's efforts of that information shows how the Commission fought with itself over whether Oswald was a paid informer for the FBI./7/

The new event is this. MGM, in conjunction with CBS, announced in May 1975 plans to produce a TV documentary series based on Ford's book./8/ It will be released later this year. What can be learned from this event? Congressional committees should find out how the plan for that TV documentary series happened. Following the reasoning of guilty till proven innocent, Congress should assume that

either Ford or someone acting for him and the rest of the coverup group contacted someone at both CBS and MGM to arrange production of the documentary series. Knowing there might be a great hue and cry being raised toward the end of the summer or in the fall of 1975 about the CIA, FBI, and domestic assassinations, the use again of Ford's book and his reputation as a Warren Commissioner was deemed desirable to combat these pressures. Perhaps someone at CBS and someone at MGM were made part of the "inner circle", and are aware of the coverup of the coverup. At CBS, the chances are good that the people who produced the four-part TV series on the JFK assassination in 1967 are very knowledgeable about the coverup. Those same people may again be helping out Mr. Ford. An article titled "The American News Media and the Assassination of President John F. Kennedy: Accessories after the Fact"/9/ demonstrates that CBS News top management made a major decision two weeks before the 1967 TV series was broadcast. They changed the conclusions reached by their own research team from conspiracy to supporting the Warren Commission. The decision was made at a level somewhere between William Paley, chairman of the board, and Leslie Midgely, executive producer. The possibility exists that external influence was brought to bear on whoever made the decision. Similar performances are cited in the article for NBC, "The New York Times", "Washington Post", "Newsweek", Associated Press, United Press, "Saturday Evening Post", "Los Angeles Times", "Chicago Tribune", all Dallas TV stations and newspapers, New Orleans TV-radio station WDSU, Capital City Broadcasting, and the North American Newspaper Alliance./9/

**"Los Angeles Times" Article
by Warren Commission Lawyers**

On May 11, 1975, an article by David Slawson and Richard Mosk appeared in the Opinion Section of the "Los Angeles Times". The title was "Oswald Alone!"/10/ Mr. Slawson was one of the attorneys on the Warren Commission staff and Mr. Mosk was one of the non-legal-staff members. The article, as in the case of David Belin's book, was an all-out attempt to reinforce the Commission's findings and to attack the assassination researchers. Three researchers in Los Angeles, Fred Newcomb, Perry Adams, and Steve Smith, have written a rebuttal manuscript to the Slawson-Mosk article in which they point out the Warren Commission's own evidence in the National Archives that clearly demonstrates the total inaccuracy of the article./11/

A Congressional committee should regard this event as another set of clues to who the "good and bad guys" are, and use it to observe the coverup relationships between the "inner circle" and the news media. Who at the Los Angeles Times made the decision to print that article at this time? Was any external influence placed upon the "Times" to publish it? Did Slawson and Mosk develop mutual anger over the turn of recent events and the new attention of some American news media toward the Zapruder film and other evidence of conspiracy? Or did someone in the Ford administration, or at the CIA, contact them and "encourage" them to get together to write the article "for the good of America", having first arranged it with that key man at the "Los Angeles Times"?

To be on the safe side, the committee would be better off assuming the latter rather than the former. Certainly, the performance of the "Los Angeles Times" through the years on both the John and Robert Kennedy assassination conspiracies has been less than admirable. For one short period in 1972, reporter David Smith of the "Times" somehow managed

to sneak through the editors and management a fairly accurate story about conspiracy evidence in the RFK case. This encouraged Al Lowenstein to the point where he told this author in the summer of 1973 that he believed "Times" top management would back a re-opening of the case. He reckoned without knowledge of Evelle Younger's important role in the coverup and Younger's very close ties to Norman Chandler, owner of the "Times", under indictment for fraud. David Smith was taken off the case and not one other truthful article about RFK's murder has appeared in the "Los Angeles Times" to date.

Who pressured Younger and Chandler to cover up the truth about both assassinations? Was the CIA agent named Manny Pena who worked for the Los Angeles Police Department a point of contact for higher-level CIA people in the local efforts to cover up? There is little question that Pena was a key man in the extensive coverup efforts by Special Unit Senator, the task force of FBI, LAPD, District Attorney, and other official groups investigating the RFK assassination. Pena headed the subgroup responsible for determining whether there had been a conspiracy. His coverup handiwork shines through quite clearly in the book, "Special Unit Senator" by Robert Houghton./12/ Naturally, Pena's conclusion was there was no conspiracy and Sirhan Sirhan was the lone, madman assassin.

"Washington Post"—"Newsweek" Editorial Stand

"Newsweek" and the "Washington Post", despite their valiant efforts in the Watergate and Impeachment situations, have contributed heavily through the years in the JFK conspiracy coverup. "Newsweek" in the April 28, 1975 issue printed several pages on the new developments in the JFK assassination case. Anyone reading the article could see the anti-conspiracy, pro-Warren Commission editorial bias shining through the tongue-in-cheek, subtle and not-so-subtle attacks on the assassination researchers. Optimists said, well at least they published something. No one knew at the time that Wesley Liebeler had served as consulting writer for "Newsweek" on the story.

Now, a Congressional committee should look into just how that came about. Liebeler was a Warren Commission lawyer. Who employed him? Who encouraged "Newsweek" to use his talents? Did Benjamin Bradlee at the "Washington Post" have anything to do with it? How about Mrs. Graham, owner of the "Post" and "Newsweek"? Did the CIA or President Ford or Vice President Rockefeller or David Belin suggest to someone at the "Post" that an article indirectly supporting the Warren Commission would probably be a good idea at about that time?

Who at "Newsweek" was involved in that magazine's intense efforts not only to cover up the JFK assassination conspiracy in 1967-68, but also to support author Hugh Aynesworth's actions as an accessory after the fact, influencing jurors' testimony in the trial of Clay Shaw?/9/ Did they receive money, threats, or coercion from Richard Helms and others at the CIA in 1967 through 1969, to discredit the Garrison investigation? It is now known that Helms ordered assistance for Shaw in order to protect the CIA agent before his trial began./14/ A Congressional committee can learn a lot about who the coverup criminals are at "Newsweek" and the "Washington Post" by exploring those connections from the period of the Garrison investigation.

Murders

And finally, we come to murders. Murders by the dozens. Witnesses, participants in the assassinations, and others have died under unexplained circumstances ever since 1963. They are still dying. Clay Shaw was the last important person to die, in 1974. His death was indeed very strange, with no autopsy, quick embalming, and the New Orleans Parish Coroner left completely unsatisfied concerning the cause of death./14/

This author is not about to claim that Gerald Ford, Henry Kissinger, Richard Nixon, and all the other members of the "inner circle" still participating in the coverup of the coverups ordered the deaths of dozens of witnesses and participants. However, a Congressional committee should investigate how several of the important ones actually died and whether they were indeed murdered by lower-level members of the various assassination teams and/or by the clandestine part of the CIA, the FBI, or the Mafia.

There would appear to be a very high probability that the clandestine CIA forces hired the Mafia to murder Castro. E. Howard Hunt has admitted under oath that he headed an assassination team to murder the president of Panama. It seems that murders of people like David Ferrie, Clay Shaw, Hank Killam, Lee Bowers, and many others/15/ connected with the JFK assassination would have been considered a rather minor, routine affair by men like these. The book "Accessories after the Fact" lists more than fifteen deaths of this type, several of them resembling Mafia kinds of murders./15/

There is a very good reason for a Congressional committee investigating the JFK assassination to look into these other murders. It is best for their health. The single most asked question at presentations and discussions by JFK assassination researchers is, "Aren't you afraid for your own safety?" The new answer being given by most researchers now is this: The only people who are in danger of being murdered by the groups in the JFK case are those falling into one of three categories: witnesses who could harm the assassination teams, participants in the assassination, and those with the power to reopen the case. In the latter category are Congressional committee members and their staffs, the New Orleans D.A. and Henry Wade, district attorney in Dallas. Wade and the New Orleans D.A. have legal jurisdiction over the crime because it was a local, and not a Federal, murder. The Congressional committees have the power base to reopen the case and are therefore in danger of being killed or harassed. Congressman Henry B. Gonzalez, who introduced House Resolution 204 to reopen all four cases (JFK, RFK, MLK, and Wallace), has already been shot at along a lonely stretch of highway leading to San Antonio, Texas. A high-powered rifle bullet struck his auto while he and his wife were driving home./16/

Other Means of "Discouraging" New Investigations

In addition to murder, there are other ways that senators and representatives may be "discouraged" from reopening the investigations. Jim Garrison's experience provides a good example. Garrison was harassed, threatened, and framed for a crime he did not commit./17/ His wife and children were threatened. He spent the better part of a year in a hospital, lost his job (D.A. of New Orleans), and nearly lost his life. He was strong enough to fight back and beat the frameup by convincing a New Orleans jury he was innocent./17/ His investigation was halted, however, and now he has withdrawn from JFK assassination research. No one can blame him.

The staff and senators on the Church committee in the Senate, the staff and representatives proposing the formation of a special House committee to reopen the JFK case through resolutions by Representatives Downing and Gonzalez, and any other Congressmen who take actions to reopen, are the ones who are in danger. They must be aware of this danger and make special efforts to ferret out the connections between the clandestine forces of the CIA or FBI and the murders, threats, or harrassment of witnesses, participants and district attorneys of the past few years. Thanks to Victor Marchetti we now know there is an excellent chance that the CIA is responsible for the harrassment of Garrison, the murderers of David Ferrie and Clay Shaw, and other murders.

These are not idle warnings or speculation. The researchers working on investigations for ten or more years are well aware of the implications of the activities now observable. Congressional committees must also be aware of the immense significance of the conspiracies involved and the rat's nest at the top of our executive branch that needs cleaning out.

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